



**In the fast-paced world in which we live**, children are growing up more rapidly than they did just a decade ago.

They have access to the **Internet**, **cell phones** with text packages, around-the-clock **entertainment**, and **pressure to succeed** like never before.

The pressure isn't just on the kids – **parents feel pressured** to make sure their children have everything their young friends own, or that they are competing at the same level as their peers in sports and school.

**But what if you followed a different drumbeat** and focused on what childhood is supposed to be filled with – **love, fun, youthful adventures, and opportunities to learn and grow?**

Creating this kind of childhood in today's world takes **courage and time**, yet research shows it's worth it.

**A recent federal study** revealed that children who grew up in abusive, neglectful or stress-filled homes carry the effects of that kind of upbringing into their work, emotions, health and parenting when they become adults.

The best way to make sure the children you are grooming for adulthood have **positive experiences** to repeat when they become parents, is to help them **celebrate each stage and age of life**, and to **enjoy the journey** with them.

**Help your kids cherish childhood** by becoming or staying involved in every aspect of their lives and helping them maintain **positive friendships**. Play with them and encourage them not to rush each stage. Remind your children often that **you love them for who they are, not for what they do**.

# Did You Know?

## 1-3

The most significant amount of brain development occurs during the first three years of life. Read and talk to your child often. Play music and baby games to stimulate her brain.

## 0-2

Babies have different cries for different needs. The more time you spend with your baby, you'll learn what each cry means and how best to soothe her.

## 2-4

Toddlers require 10 to 14 hours of sleep to grow and thrive. Their sleep needs are less than when they were infants, but they still need significant time to rest their bodies.

## 6-8

Six to eight year olds can battle your will. It's normal for them to question your authority, but appropriate for you to rein them in, while giving them some choices about what they wear, eat or do.

## 3-5

Kids 3 to 5 are just the right age to learn what it means to be kind to others. Encouraging them to share or comfort a friend who is afraid or sad teaches them empathy – a skill they can use throughout life.

## 11-13

Middle Schoolers are at an awkward stage that leaves them growing into their body and sometimes clumsy or unsure of themselves. Reassure them that this stage will pass!

## 12-14

Until they reach about age 15, children are not able to reason as adults. Despite their pleas otherwise, give them independence based on their individual level of maturity.



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1-800-552-7096 Virginia Child Abuse Hotline (language line available)

800-CHILDREN (800-244-5373) Parent Helpline